

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FISCAL YEAR 2000 ANNUAL PROGRAM PERFORMANCE REPORT

INTRODUCTION

In the Federal government, performance management is comprised of three critical elements: (1) a strategic plan that guides the 5-year goals and strategies of each Department; (2) annual performance plans that lay out year-to-year strategies and targets that make progress toward the Department's long-term goals; and (3) annual performance reports that relay to Congress and the American people how good a job the Department did in reaching the goals it set out to accomplish in the previous fiscal year.

This annual performance report for FY 2000 is submitted in accordance with the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA). It compares actual performance with the performance goals the Department set in FY 2000 on an agency-by agency basis. In accordance with GPRA, this report is aligned with the Department's previous strategic plan, covering FY 1997-2002.

USDA currently is in the process of revamping its performance planning and reporting processes. In the future, the Department will take a more corporate approach to planning and reporting under GPRA—presenting to the public, the President, and Congress an integrated set of goals for the Department. These broad-view documents will be supplemented by agency-level plans and reports that offer more detail on specific efforts. Future performance plans and reports will be tied to the Department's current strategic plan and its new approach to performance management. This new process should provide a clearer picture of the Department's performance.

FY 2000 Annual Performance Report

This annual performance report is comprised of agency-level accounts of how each arm of USDA is making tangible progress toward its strategic objectives. Each agency report offers the same information to readers: the agency's mission statement, a summary of both its long-term strategic objectives and its specific FY 2000 performance goals. The report also compares actual performance with the goals set for FY 2000. Where performance goals are not achieved, an explanation is provided, as well as strategies and revised timelines for reaching these goals, where feasible. Actual performance data is presented for both FY 1999 and FY 2000 to show performance trends and each agency report then evaluates current FY 2001 performance goals in light of these trends.

Looking Ahead

This report shows that while progress has been made, significant challenges exist in administering national programs of the size, scope, and magnitude of food stamps, the national forest system, food inspections, and farm and rural credit programs. The scale and complexity of these vast Federal programs present major management challenges to USDA, particularly in terms of the availability of accurate, credible, and timely performance data; competing and sometimes conflicting government programs and priorities; and, reliance on third parties to deliver key components of USDA programs.

Through the performance management process, the Department has learned a great deal about how it can improve its operations and address these challenges. The Bush Administration has made clear that improved performance and management of the Federal government will be a key priority in the years to come. USDA managers understand that performance results must continue to improve if the Department is to successfully address the needs of its diverse and growing customer base, achieve its strategic goals for the future, and successfully meet the challenges of a lean Federal workforce.